

What is claimed is:

1. A method of providing secure access to a service on a service web server comprising:
 - (a) maintaining at a permission web server a first permission, wherein the first permission comprises a label related to the service and a digital signature of a first user;
 - (b) providing access to the first permission to a second user upon said second user authenticating to said permission web server;
 - (c) providing the second user a permission comprising the first permission and a permission link comprising the label and a digital signature of the permission web server;
 - (d) receiving at the service web server from said second user a request to access the service;
 - (e) receiving the permission from the second user at the service web server;
 - (f) verifying the digital signature of the permission web server and the digital signature of the first user in the permission; and
 - (g) providing the second user access to the service if step (f) produces a positive result.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the first and second user are the same.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the label comprises a URL for identifying the service.
4. A system for providing secure access to a service on a service web server comprising:
 - a permission web server that maintains a first permission, wherein the first permission comprises a label related to the service and a digital signature of a first user; that provides a second user access to the first permission upon the second user authenticating to the permission web server; and that provides the second user a permission comprising the first permission and a permission link comprising the label and a digital signature of the permission web server; and

the service web server that receives from the second user a request to access the service and the permission; that verifies the digital signature of the permission web server and the digital signature of the first user in the permission; and that provides the second user access to the service if the verification produces a positive result.

5. A method of providing secure access to a service on a service web server comprising:

- (a) maintaining at a permission web server a first permission, wherein the first permission comprises a label related to the service and a digital signature of a first user;
- (b) providing access to the first permission to a second user upon said second user authenticating to said permission web server;
- (c) providing the second user a permission comprising the first permission and a permission link comprising the label and a digital signature of the permission web server;
- (d) receiving at the service web server from a subsequent user a request to access the service, the subsequent user having been delegated a subsequent permission comprising the permission;
- (e) receiving the subsequent permission from the subsequent user at the service web server;
- (f) verifying at least the digital signature of the permission web server and the digital signature of the first user in the permission; and
- (g) providing the subsequent user access to the service if step (f) produces a positive result.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the subsequent permission is delegated to the subsequent user via electronic mail.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein the subsequent permission is delegated to the subsequent user by a subsequent web server.

8. A system for providing secure access to a service on a service web server comprising:
a permission web server that maintains a first permission, wherein the first permission comprises a label related to the service and a digital signature of a first user; that provides a second user access to the first permission upon the second user authenticating to the permission web server; and that provides to the second user a permission comprising the first permission and a permission link comprising the label and a digital signature of the permission web server; and
the service web server that receives from a subsequent user a request to access the service and a subsequent permission, comprising the permission, the subsequent user having been delegated the subsequent permission; that verifies at least the digital signature of the permission web server and the digital signature of the first user in the permission; and that provides the subsequent user access to the service if the verification produces a positive result.